

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1145

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7783

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE: PROFESSOR REISCHAUER

REF: SEOUL 7737

1. PROFESSOR REISCHAUER VISITED SEOUL FOR THREE HOURS NOV 17 AND MET KIM TAE-CHUNG. KIM GREETED HIM AT THE AIRPORT AND THEY HAD LUNCH AT KIM'S HOME. REISCHAUER DELIVERED LETTER OF INVITATION TO KIM. HE DID NOT MEET ANY SENIOR ROK OFFICIALS. ACCORDING PRESS, "REISCHAUER'S SECRETARY", AFTER ARRIVAL, CALLED THE OFFICE OF VICE FOREIGN MINISTER YUN SOK-HON AFTER OFFICE HOURS AND WAS TOLD THAT YUN HAD AN IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT AND WAS NOT ABLE SEE HIM.

2. ROK MEWS MEDIA GAVE LOW-KEYED COVERAGE TO PROF REISCHAUER'S VISIT. REPORTS QUOTED REISCHAUER AS SAYING HE HAD COME TO DELIVER INVITATION AND TO HIGHLIGHT HIS BELIEF THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US-ROK RELATIONS FOR KIM TO BE ALLOWED TO GO. ALSO QUOTED KIM AS SAYING REISCHAUER'S AIM WAS TO SEEK THE HELP OF ROKG FOR HIS EARLY DEPARTURE FROM KOREA. NEWS STORIES GAVE IMPRESSION REISCHAUER FAILED TO SEE VICE FOREIGN MINISTER BECAUSE FLIGHT FROM TOKYO ARRIVED LATE.

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3. MOFA VERSION OF ABORTIVE REISCHAUER ATTEMPT TO CALL ON VICE

FONMIN YUN DIFFERS FROM PRESS. ACCORDING MOFA YUN WAS PREPARED TO SEE REISCHAUER. HOWEVER, PLANE WAS DELAYED AND AT 1:00 P.M. VICE FONMIN'S SECRETARY RECEIVED CALL FROM KIM TAE-CHUNG'S SECRETARY WHO PUT ON REISCHAUER. REISCHAUER EXPRESSED REGRET OVER FACT PLANE WAS DELAYED AND HE UNABLE TO KEEP APPOINTMENT. AGAIN AT 2:30 P.M. VICE FONMIN'S SECRETARY RECEIVED CALL ALLEGEDLY FROM KIM TAE-CHUNG'S SECRETARY INDICATING REISCHAUER WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH VICE FONMIN BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE ON 3:30 FLIGHT. HOWEVER, KOREAN NEWSMAN AT KIM'S HOME APPARENTLY PICKED UP TELEPHONE AND IN CONFUSION CONTACT WITH KIM'S SECRETARY WAS NOT REESTABLISHED.

4. COMMENT: EARLIER ON DAY OF REISCHAUER'S ARRIVAL. PRIME MINISTER SECRETARY HAD AGAIN CALLED TO CONVEY PRIMIN MINISTER'S PERSONAL CONCERN OVER VISIT (REFTEL). HE REITERATED PRIME MINISTER'S CONCERN THAT NOTHING ADVERSELY AFFECT KOREAN-JAPANESE SETTLEMENT THAT WAS SO LABORIOUSLY ARRIVED AT AS WELL AS CONCERN THAT REISCHAUER'S TACTICS WOULD NOT HELP IN PRESENT SITUATION.

6. CLEARLY REISCHAUER'S GESTURE IN VISITING KIM TAE-CHUNG FOR FEW HOURS HAS SERVED TO HIGHLIGHT KIM'S UNDERSTANDABLE DESIRE TO LEAVE ROK NOW. HOWEVER, PRIMIN'S MESSAGE TO US IS CLEAR. KIM WILL

NOT LEAVE THE COUNTRY UNTIL KOREAN-JAPANESE MINISTERIAL MEETING HAS BEEN HELD AND RELATIONS ARE "NORMALIZED". THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE THAT KIM WILL BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE EVEN AT THAT POINT. AND, WE BELIEVE THAT ALLOWING KIM TO LEAVE COUNTRY IN ANY EVENT WILL NOT BE AN EASY DECISION FOR THE ROKG. HOWEVER PUBLICIZED EFFORTS TO FORCE GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW KIM TO LEAVE NOW COULD COMPLICATE LATER EFFORTS TO SECURE KIM'S DEPARTURE AFTER ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS ARE NORMALIZED.

7. REISCHAUER MADE NO ATTEMPT TO CONTACT EMBASSY DURING HIS BRIEF STAY.
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